

January 22, 2001

Dear Vader area resident,

Last summer 76 European Gypsy Moths and six egg masses were detected in Vader. To eradicate this infestation by one of America's worst forest pest insects, the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has proposed to treat a 29-acre site in Vader next spring with the biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki* (*Btk*). The proposal involves three ground treatments, 7 to 14 days apart, which would begin in late April or early May depending on leaf development and when the Gypsy Moth caterpillars hatch.

In order to inform the citizens of Vader about the damage that the Gypsy Moth does and the proposed treatment, an open house will be held in Vader on **Thursday, February 8, 2001** in the **cafeteria of the Vader Elementary School**, 704, D Street from **6 p.m. to 8 p.m.** You are invited to drop in any time during this period to review material and ask questions.

The Gypsy Moth causes millions of dollars of economic and environmental damage in the U.S. each year by feeding on the foliage of more than 500 different species of trees and shrubs. If it were to become permanently established in Washington State, it would have a devastating impact on our agriculture and timber industries.

Btk is a selective and effective bacterial insecticide found naturally in the soil and is toxic only to moths and butterflies that are in the caterpillar stage when the insecticide is applied. It has been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use on numerous food and fiber crops and has been used in Gypsy Moth control projects since the early 1980s. *Btk* is commonly used today by organic gardeners. *Btk* has a proven safety record with people, pets, livestock, birds, fish, and other insects such as bees.

Enclosed is a fact sheet on the Gypsy Moth and the biological insecticide *Btk*. Also enclosed is a map of the proposed treatment site in Vader and a copy of a press release recently sent to the media in the Vader area concerning the proposed treatment. If you have any questions on the proposed treatment, please call our toll-free Gypsy Moth Hotline (1-800-443-6684) or email us at Gypsymoth@agr.wa.gov.

I encourage you to attend the open house on **February 8**. I believe that you will find the information presented interesting and informative. Since the Gypsy Moth was first detected in Washington State in 1974, the WSDA has eradicated all past infestations of this invasive insect. We want that record to continue.

Sincerely,

LABORATORY SERVICES DIVISION

Chad H. Phillips
Project Entomologist

Attachments